



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
CURRICULUM SKILLS AND STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 June 2025 at 2pm – 4.30pm
R06, AgriTech building, Reaseheath College

Present: Jane Cowell (independent, chair)
 Jan Chillery (independent)
 Marcus Clinton (principal)
 Sean Houlston (independent)

In attendance: James Eagney (assistant principal performance and progress)
 John Kendal (assistant principal student experience and support)
 Jane Nickisson (assistant principal and dean of higher education)
 Paul Spearritt (vice principal curriculum and quality)
 Sharon Yates (assistant principal apprenticeships and business hub)
 Jackie Schillinger (head of governance)

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Opening items
1.1	Apologies and Declarations: Apologies were received and accepted from Mike Gorton. Students Summer Lakin and Eli Broadhurst gave apologies due to setting up for the student ball today. There were no declarations of interest made. The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
1.2	RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2025 were approved as a correct record.
1.3	On matters arising it was confirmed that the governance of AI with reference to good practice in the sector is an area that the governance development plan needs to reference and link into the college digital strategy group to progress this.
Engage - Responsive Curriculum that meets needs	
Excite - Tell the Story	
2.	TOR 2: Source Material and Evidence for Curriculum Intent - To scrutinise the information used to decide the direction and delivery of the College's curriculum
2.1	Review rationale for curriculum intent: The principal provided an update on the external skills policy environment and recruitment data review, drawing on the external environment presentation given on the governor development day on 3 June. He set out the key impacts and factors influencing the development of the curriculum strategy to enable the committee to scrutinise the information used to decide the direction and delivery of the college's curriculum. These impacts included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government announced £650m to support Construction skills and develop the capacity to support the industry with house building. This is in the first instance through Boot Camps and through establishing 10 regional Technical Excellence Colleges to act as hubs. The college as a result have had round one bids accepted for a range of

	<p>Construction Skills Boot Camps for 25/26 and are seeking to increase Construction staffing capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be important to show the economic value and contribution of the land-based sector as only sectors featuring in the industrial strategy as priority will get additional support. Skills England have said they are open to considering land based, however we must be able to evidence our economic worth. Landex on behalf of the colleges are commissioning a special economic contribution report for our sector. • Recurring themes that cut through more regionally and nationally are food security and the environment. The college is recruiting to a sustainable farming Skills Boot Camp. The college is hoping to launch new T Level in Horticulture and recruit to the Food Science T Level. The college is also reconfiguring roles to be able to offer a better range of food related short and master class courses. • Higher Level Skills continue to be a priority regionally and nationally. The college is awaiting final sign off on our new HTQ qualifications and the IOT will provide focus for level four and five provision. New HNC provision is commencing in Construction in 25/26. • Devolution is likely to happen with a Cheshire and Warrington deal. The college is working with the other Cheshire and Warrington colleges to ensure a joined-up approach to maximising the opportunities with devolution. The Rural Strategy Group are crystallising their rural ask and this will include strong reference to accessibility through transport and the importance of food security and sustainable environment. • The LSIP board await further clarification on future commissioning and format. The board are more aware that we are an outlier in respect the LSIP including land based/agriculture and also the national cross LSIP group on Agriculture. We will aim to ensure this has more prominence in any new LSIP. • SEN and High Need remains a high priority and with increasing numbers. The college has commissioned a national expert to support us with the development of this curriculum. Smaller changes this September and more reform anticipated in September 2026.
2.2	<p>Challenge raised by the committee on reviewing the source material used to direct the curriculum included the following key areas of discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres for Technical Excellence linked to construction requires the college to be engaged and well sighted to opportunities presented, with assurance that the college is proactive in collaborative opportunities in the region. • Positive recruitment picture for next year at this stage is promising. On Green jobs and green skills this needs to be at the heart of the Excite Tell the Story strategic objective and a strong message including on the new website. An area to look at is the staff delivery and their knowledge of green skills within their areas. Sustainable skills boot camps – Farm Diversification. Recruiting to this now. • Devolution is likely to happen, with significant opportunities for skills funding, however, there remains some uncertainty in Cheshire East with it likely to be close on voting for devolution and it is important for all members to seek to engage with local politicians on this agenda where possible.
2.3	<p>RESOLVED: The committee took the opportunity to scrutinise the information used to decide the direction and delivery of the College’s curriculum and considered the college well</p>

	sighted and engaged in key skills policies and able to respond proactively via its business and curriculum planning process.
3.	TOR 1: Curriculum Intent and Impact - To understand, review and advise the Board on the intent and impact of the College's curriculum
3.1	<p>Curriculum Plan Development Review: The committee considered the latest curriculum planning outcomes across FE, Adult, Apprenticeships and HE provision, with consideration of intent and intended impact. The main changes highlighted and discussed in the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2025-26 one of the main aims is the addition of two new T-Levels. Marketing, which has its own specific T-Level route, and Ornamental Horticulture and Landscaping, which sits within the Agriculture, Land-management and Production route and shares some common delivery with the Forestry and Arboriculture pathway. • Changes to the Construction curriculum offer following the removal of the Onsite Construction T-Level by the DfE. Changes to the original curriculum reform proposals, specifically in relation to defunding, have provided some additional flexibility for bespoke offerings to cohorts who we believe would not be suited to a T-Level. • Implementation of the first phase of the changes to our Foundation offer from September. • Slight adjustments to the offering in Floristry based on likely recruitment and efficiencies. • Continuation of planning to increase market share in land-based apprenticeships and potential realisation of new opportunities. • Introduction of a new Access to HE courses and recruitment to the Curriculum Development Lead (FE) role, to help boost our adult skills and full cost offer. • Initiation of two skills bootcamps in 2025-26, with successful 1st stage bid for additional bootcamps focused on Construction Trades. • 60-minute lessons remain but a short break/travel period now implemented between all but the final period. Level 1 and 2 courses predominantly 3-days in 2025-26, rather than 4-days. • Ongoing work to assess the implications of the 100 hours delivery requirement in maths and English.
3.2	<p>Questions and challenge in the meeting to understand and review intent and impact included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your business planning, what external data do you use to inform and shape your curriculum development? We use Vector, as the sector tool that provides a picture of post-16 further education, including apprenticeships and higher education, alongside local community demographics, skills requirements and progression opportunities in our area, and more recently our own LMI data via Lightcast. This feeds into business planning and is used to amend and change courses and look at growth areas. Skills England skills gaps analysis and our industry skills boards and industry advisory groups, bring all this together into business planning. • Can you give an example? It led to our conversation on Skills England skills gaps data about the need in a few years' time for more carpentry and joinery skills and this influenced us to put on the construction bootcamps and prioritise this in our curriculum development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to note however that there is a balance to avoid becoming too demand led. For example, Animal Management is part of our core provision and provides young people with transferable career ready skills that employers say they need. • Is there a sufficient margin on the bootcamp provision that you are now growing in response to demand? There will be some extra cost, but much of this is already covered, so it supports good growth in our adult provision, with the potential for progression into apprenticeships also.
3.3	<p>Discussion followed on the college's review of its Foundation offer. The Assistant Principal Performance and Progress explained that the first phase will commence from September 2025 following extensive work by the department team, relevant Executive leads and a leading external consultant. He set out the approach as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first phase will see some curriculum re-shaping to provide a clearer progression route and intent behind each element of provision. • In broad terms, students will follow one of three pathways, which will be established with a new, more robust, initial assessment process. • The pathways are, Specialist Provision Skills for Working Life (1-2 years), Start and Grow in the Land-based Sector with pathways in Animal Care, Equine and Agriculture (1-2 years) and the Supported Internship (1 year). • We are currently discussing the potential creation of a pre-SI (Supported Internship) course, as we have a number of students who are not quite ready to access the full SI programme and would benefit from an additional period of work skills development. • The employability course that Ofsted raised concerns with, during their inspection, will not be offered and we believe that we have responded well to challenge raised and set out a strong curriculum offer and progression route.
3.4	<p>Questions and challenge in the meeting to understand and review intent and impact of the reviewed Foundation offer included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the rationale behind moving away from a more qualification-based offer. Recognising and rewarding prior attainment (RAPA) is becoming the common approach now for learners with SEND, moving more to the key focus being on personal individual skills development, and this is in line with some of the feedback from the Ofsted inspection. • Where does Forest College sit within this? Forest college is the 14-16 provision that sits outside the pathway framework, but feeds into it. • How are you working with curriculum teams to ensure this works? There is much work with Curriculum Area Managers now to understand how and why we are doing this, so that all areas understand the need to adapt the delivery across the college not just in the foundation area. There is still a piece of work to do on learning support and ILPs support in the curriculum areas, which is a priority into next year. • Will you have a NEET (not in education, employment or training) offer and if so, when? This will be introduced possibly by January 2026, with a small programme. A more RAPA approach can help with this, and we also have the foundation apprenticeships that are aimed at NEETs. • Do you see this as a significant area of need, and do you have the capacity to deliver this? Agree that it is becoming an important area in policy terms and the recourse and capacity is available to start to grow this area of provision.

3.5	<p>Discussion followed on the college's higher education offer. The Dean of HE explained that it is proposed that the future relationship with the current validating partner revert to an associate college agreement on a non-exclusive basis, which will enable continued working with them, but also allow the development of other opportunities. She explained the intent and impact of the curriculum plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three clear strands to the HE curriculum offer going forwards: 1. animal science, behaviour welfare vet nursing; 2. environment ecology Agric food sustainability and, 3. GFE strand of sport, access, engineering construction business management. • The intent is for a clear vocational curriculum with progression out into industry. Clear what you will look like as a graduate. The 'Future focus' programme is embedding those career ready skills from the outset. • New HE provision approved for delivery in 2025 academic year will support our strategic objectives around higher technical qualifications and our first Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) in Construction Management and Sustainable Business Management will offer students a newly updated and industry focused programme. Further HTQs are planned for delivery in 2026 following the confirmation of approval by sector body IfATE. • Preparation for the implementation of the Lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) will include the review of the opportunities to deliver our programmes on a modular basis, commencing with our HTQs and progressing to the rest of our degree portfolio in subsequent years.
3.6	<p>Questions and challenge in the meeting to understand and review intent and impact of the Higher Education offer included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your priorities within this? Priorities are to relaunch equine and agriculture, vet bioscience provision. Masters – validate for first delivery 2026-27. • Are the staff behind these changes? The whole delivery team and the programme team have worked together to review the provision and breaking the ground for some change. So, there is an appetite for change and the direction of travel has been informed by them. • Is there sufficient resource and staffing capacity to deliver it? Assurance given. • Is there the demand also in apprenticeships? Members of the executive team are working together on the plan for an infill approach in this area.
3.7	<p>RESOLVED: The committee supported curriculum intent and impact outcome of business planning, as driving the strategic plan 4Es and in line with the agreed Accountability Statement 2025-26 priorities, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In line with our curriculum intent, continue to deliver an inclusive curriculum offer to address Government priorities, remove barriers to progression, and develop essential work readiness skills. 2. Develop a more extensive adult skills offer, with a specific focus on addressing industry skills gaps and green skills, whilst also supporting local needs and the devolution process in Cheshire and Warrington. 3. Carry out a High-Needs review, working closely with key partners to address local needs, implementing all necessary changes to maximise outcomes and increase opportunity.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Promote the development of higher-level skills, with an emphasis on science related content, through the use of HTQ's along with higher-level apprenticeships. 5. Develop Agri-Food provision to meet, and influence, key national strategies that align to our specialism. 6. Develop a strategy to increase the College's green skills offer, specifically focusing on the expected growth brought about by the net zero transition
3.8	<p>Careers Advice and Guidance Report: The committee received reporting to monitor provision of careers and progression information, advice and guidance, including to SEND learners. The Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support presented assurance on quality of provision and meeting the Gatsby principles, with an explanation of how these will change from next year and the impact on the college. In particular there will be an increased focus on inclusive individualised support. Following this, he provided evidence of impact with a review of the most recent destinations data from the external survey carried out on actual destinations by QDP. He highlighted strong evidence of impact with 92% of students progressing to positive destinations, an increase on the previous year (85%) and above the college internal KPI target of 80%. There was a reduction in those progressing into industry relevant employment compared to the previous year, which was in line with wider benchmarks.</p> <p>Key improvements seen this year were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Progression to Positive Destinations - +7pp increase in students progressing to employment or education. This is the most notable improvement and reflects better post-course outcomes. • Increase in Higher Education uptake - Rise from 6% to 9% suggests effective academic preparation or progression planning. • Self-employment (16+ hrs/week) - Increase from 5% to 7%, potentially reflecting increased entrepreneurial outcomes. • Voluntary Work and Social Destinations - Voluntary work increased, possibly reflecting broader engagement or values-based decisions.
3.9	<p>In discussion on the presentation, the committee raised several questions:</p> <p>How else can you measure impact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulse Survey: Student feedback on careers programme effectiveness. • Withdrawal and destination data used to assess impact. • Matrix Accreditation: Reaccredited in May 2024. • IAG Audit by internal auditors RSM: Substantial assurance with one low-priority recommendation. <p>What are your priorities to improve for 2025-26?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realignment of the team structure and line management – aim to have a more proactive programme and embedded with curriculum and progress coaches. • Theme of inclusion and individual needs. • Address the decline in full-time employment • Improve course impact on employment outcomes • Expand Higher Education and Level 4+ progression • Monitor and tackle underemployment • Targeted support for High-Needs and underrepresented groups • Sustain survey engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Reaseheath's data compare with others? As the data has only just been received we have not yet done this analysis but we can provide this next time/to the committee. • Can you explain how you engage with parents on careers? Consider a parents' career event so can talk to both student and parent. Increase visibility of intended destinations. Consider parent focus groups on teams to seek parent views. • Do you release staff into industry to pick up the current culture of work, not just the technical skills? We do this but it can be a challenge to achieve this consistently due to staffing pressures.
3.10	RESOLVED: The reporting provided substantial assurance on quality and impact of careers advice and guidance, with clear strategy and priorities for further improvement next year, with new Gatsby benchmarks to work towards.
4.	TOR 5: Strategic Risk Review
4.1	RESOLVED: SR5 Curriculum, Skills and Employers/Stakeholders review of risk appetite and current risk position reports that the committee takes reasonable assurance on the management of risk in this area recognising that the college needs to take a level of risk in what is an uncertain environment with new government strategies coming through.
5.	Closing items
5.1	RESOLVED: The committee was satisfied that it had met its terms of reference and planned cycle of business for the meeting, over the year it recognised that the uncertainty over the government industry and skills strategies had delayed the college's review of its industry engagement strategy, which would be a priority for the autumn term. It recommended its terms of reference for approval by the Board.
5.2	<p>Recommendations for the cycle of business were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in mind to not create too much more to do for the executive leads • Look at themed big-ticket items over the year, including devolution, HE and development of the associate college approach, moving forward with the Foundation offer, Skills strategy; Quality of the employer engagement in the curriculum and towards the end of the year a look at the impact of the work of the education partnership manager. • Co-opted members, potentially look at shadow board Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington for an external view and governor Jane Artess with expertise in careers advice and guidance policy and higher education is joining the committee.
5.3	There was no other business reported to the meeting.
5.4	RESOLVED: The date of next meeting was agreed as Thursday 20 November 2pm

The meeting closed at 4.40pm

Approved as a correct record 20 November 2025

Jane Cowell OBE, Chair